



Perspectives

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COVID-19 Effects on Rides and Races

KEVIN BESSETT

The last five months have been nothing short of surreal, strange, weird, scary, and thought provoking. The world has more than enough problems as it is, and throwing a pandemic onto the heap of challenges is not helping matters.

Here in Vermont we are fortunate to have the virus mostly under control (let's all try to keep it that way) and some outdoor activities around the state have started up. Included in this are VP and touring rides. Getting to this point required a surprising amount of work (tons of emails, research, website updates, etc.). Thanks to all who helped with that—I cannot imagine what it has been like for some business owners and managers as they restart their businesses.

The COVID era has led to significant changes in how the club conducts rides. The first change is that you must pre-register online for each ride. This is for tracking purposes and I will delete the information collected after 30 days. You will find the details in the ride announcement on the Listserv. You must practice distancing of at least six feet before, during, and after rides. Lastly, we ask that you carry a face mask or covering on the ride. There are several reasons for this. Some stores require masks, and if you have a mechanical and need to get a ride back to your car, the driver will likely appreciate you wearing a mask.

As for other club rides, the only other one likely to start is the Tuesday evening training ride. That

may happen in early August. The Wednesday evening ride is not likely to happen this year.

On the racing side, TTs may start in the second half of July, but it is not looking promising for any practice crits this year.

Please remember that rides/events are dependent on two factors: Volunteers and the State's COVID-19 guidance. Some volunteers may understandably feel uneasy about the possible exposure to the virus, and if replacements are not located, the club will cancel the event. The same will happen if the State puts the kibosh on allowing the gathering of groups.

Be healthy! 🚴

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PHOTO CREDIT: TOM BROIDO



Out There on the Road

KEVIN BESSETT

Road riding can lead to some great experiences, especially on new-to-you roads, but being on the road comes with some inherent risk. The key thing to know and remember is that you have a large say in mitigating those risks. I'd like to share some ideas on doing just that. I hope you find them helpful. Even seasoned cyclists can use reminders.

Crucial items that may save your life: A mirror and front/rear flashers (at a minimum, have a rear one with a bright pulse).

Think safety. A helmet and eye protection are must-haves. Avoid heavily travelled roads, especially those with little shoulder. Use hand signals, stop at stop signs/lights, share the road, and learn to recognize sketchy situations so you can be prepared to act quickly – have a plan B.

Be the center of attention. Bright clothing helps you stand out. Flashers take it to the next level.

Be aware. Listen and watch for traffic, dogs, and people. Anticipate cars pulling out or turning in front of you. Always question your visibility to drivers. Scan the road surface for debris and hazards. Sometimes avoiding a crash comes down to milliseconds.

Know what's behind you before moving/turning left or right. Never pull out into the lane or turn around without looking behind you (a mirror makes this much easier). Use a hand signal for a few seconds prior to making the move – holding the signal buys you a little extra time in case you missed a vehicle or rider behind you.

Be responsible. Stop at stop signs/traffic lights (or at least slow down to a crawl at a stop sign). If you come to an intersection with backed up traffic, slow way down when passing on the

right (three mph or less). If you are going faster and a car suddenly pulls to the right, you're screwed. I have seen it happen. If only five to eight cars are backed up, merge into the queue. Drivers will respect you for this. Use a hand signal first!

Make friends! Waive to drivers who give you a break. When you hear/see a vehicle behind you, visibly move right (if safe to do so), even if only six inches. This shows the driver that you are sharing the road, and many will return the favor. It really works!

Take the lane. If you are near the speed limit, take the lane. Doing so gives you the greatest visibility, and preserves you a spot in the lane. This is very important when going downhill – imagine going 35 mph and a vehicle from behind squeezes by you with oncoming traffic. This is a bad scene, and it happens. A GMBC member was severely injured in a situation just like this.

the bike. On an empty street, create virtual hazards and steer around them, or try stopping quickly to see what that feels like (use both brakes because the front brake provides up to 75% of braking power). Start out with light maneuvers or braking, and work your way up to more abrupt avoidance/stopping. When braking hard, move your rump to the very back of the seat and lower the torso. This changes your center of gravity and will greatly reduce the chance of going over the bars (i.e., flipping).

Cornering. Corners at speed tend to scare people and many crashes happen when cornering. For more confidence, try this: (1) First, complete braking before entering the corner (braking in corners can cause crashes); (2) Shift your head and look towards the exit/end of the corner (don't look down); and (3) really push down on the outside pedal and on the inside handlebar (this stabilizes the bike when in the arc of the corner). It helps to be on in the drops, too. It takes practice, but works.

Riding with others.

Communicate! Yell out hazards that you see, when you are turning or if a turn is coming up, and yell "braking" if you need to slow down for any reason. This type of communication will prevent crashes. Always be gentle on the brakes when someone is behind you.

Riding two abreast is legal so long as the cyclists are on a section of road with a clear line of sight and are not impeding the "reasonable flow

of traffic." You must share the road even in the heat of battle. Irresponsible riders irritate motorists, and tragically, cyclists have been targeted and killed by drivers who've flipped out. I know of several incidents locally where drivers flipped, but luckily no riders were seriously hurt. 🚲



PHOTO CREDIT: TOM BROIDO

Look forward. If you tend to find yourself looking just five or 10 feet in front of you, you will miss hazards and will crash someday. Even when riding behind someone, look beyond that person.

Practice your bike handling. This is a great way to gain confidence on

Socially Connecting in a New Environment

BRIAN KINSMAN

GMBC has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. Over the years I've done TT's, Wednesday training rides, backroad rides, touring, and VP rides. Each of them soon turned into fun social events as I got to know people. But how does it all get started? What would it be like to be a newbie again? Well, this winter I got to find out.

I started spending the winter in Nokomis, Florida. Part of the choice to winter there included some Google reconnaissance. I found that the greater Sarasota/Venice area had at least two well-established bicycle clubs. When I got down there in January, I made it a priority to find out when and where group rides happened and just show up. I chose a Tuesday morning ride with a club called Coastal Cruisers. I know it sounds a bit like a Harley motorcycle club, but I was relieved to see men and women in Lycra hanging around some really sweet road bikes. I knew I had the right place and probably the right club. I didn't know anybody, but there were a few extra-extroverted people who made a point to welcome me. This club is primarily made up of seasonal retirees: aka "snow birds." Most were over 60. I certainly fit well into the age group.

Now I faced a decision of which group to ride with. There were about eight groups going out. I did a visual audit of calf and quad size versus weight to try to assess what group I should join. This, of course, is tricky business because some of those who you think are going in a 16mph group will jump in with the 18mph group and throw your analysis out the window at the last second. Another complicating factor was estimating my own fitness. I hadn't ridden since October and even then, because of illness, I hadn't ridden much since July. If I went out with

too fast a group and got dropped, I'd be lost because I had no clue where I was or where any of the roads went. If I went out with too slow a group, my ego might be damaged. I decided to humble myself and go out with a 13-14mph group. This proved to be about the right place for me to start. Later, I sort of got complimented in my choice, as the regulars see many people come down and jump into groups that are too fast. They do well for a few miles, and then someone has to drop back to ride with them. On these rides, the different groups will often take different routes, so it's not always as simple as dropping back to the next group. It was a good fit for me, and I had a wonderful ride along the Gulf Coast. The typical weekday ride is about 30 miles with a break midway. Weekend rides are sometimes a bit longer.

An interesting dynamic in this club is E-bikes. There are people still riding in the club well into their 80's. Some ride E-bikes and some don't. The club rules for E-bikes are that they are allowed on rides. They request that in the groups of 16mph or greater, they stay at the back of the group. They are not allowed in paceline riding and generally you don't see them in the 18+ mph groups. All this is to say, there was a wonderful diversity of riders out enjoying cycling.

The Tuesday rides generally included a 10-mile stretch called Casey Key Road, offering a nice view of the Gulf Coast. The Thursday ride I did included a trip to a farmers' market for our rest stop and then a ride up Manasota Key along the coast. Eventually, after a few weeks, my fitness came back, and I was able to ride with and meet new people. When I used to mountain bike race, I always called a bad year a great chance to meet new people. When it was a really bad year, I called it public service, because hey, some-

body has to come in last. Likewise bouncing through the groups helped me meet more people. At some point, I started meshing with the same group on Tuesday and a different group on Thursday. On Tuesday's ride, Don was the leader. I later found out he was the club VP, so I guess that was the "VP ride." I joked with Don that I liked riding with him because I felt if anything happened, they'd all come looking for us, because he was a club dignitary. He didn't seem to think so. A woman in our group was always saying friendly hellos as we passed by pedestrians or other cyclists. It was really special. I asked her why she did it and she said it was because riding her bike made her happy and she wanted to share that however she could.

One of the popular places for weekend rides was "Bird Land." This was a fascinating place, on the outskirts of a town called Rotunda; a suburban development built on wetlands. After one of the hurricanes many years ago, they realized it wasn't a good place to build houses. The developer went broke, leaving miles and miles of finished roads, sidewalks, canals and bike paths, but not a house in sight and, obviously no cars. It is possible to do a 30-mile road ride in Bird Land without ever seeing a car. The pavement, although 20 years old, is great, because they don't have frost busting it up. Since it is a wetland, there aren't many trees and the coastal breezes blow right through. It can make for a long day of headwinds, as it did this year on Century Day and other rides. There were days that I dreamt of a tree-sheltered ride up App Gap.

Early on, my wife and I did a Saturday ride with the club on our tandem. We met another tandem couple the week before when out riding and invited

Socially Connecting

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P'tit Train Du Nord

by YASMIN TAYEBY

Last September, my husband and I loaded up our gravel bikes for our first bike-packing vacation. We chose Le P'tit Train Du Nord, an old rail trail in Quebec that has been converted to one of the nicest routes around, complete with amenities for cyclists along the entire 200km/124mile trail. Unfortunately, work schedules didn't allow for us to do the full length this time around, but we made it to the halfway mark and plan on going back to do the whole route once the borders open.

This adapted railroad provides a beautiful way to travel between the villages and towns of Quebec while seeing breathtaking scenery, enjoying the gastronomie of the region, and staying at quaint B&B's. While a luggage transportation service exists, we really enjoyed carrying all of our packs ourselves. It allowed us to keep a flexible schedule, if needed, and we just found it to be more fun! Due to the P'tit Train being a retired railway, there are plenty of old train stations along the route that have been converted into cafes, rest stops, bike shops, and more. All rest stops have bathrooms, water stations, bike pumps, and basic bike tools available.

We arrived in the evening in a town just west of Montreal called Saint Jerome, and had the requisite carbo-loaded dinner at an Italian restau-



stopping point. For the first few kilometers leaving Saint Jerome, the route still felt a little bit metropolitan, complete with graffiti-lined tunnels and sections of the path that ran parallel to roadways. As we left the city limits, however, the tree cover started growing and the traffic noise started to fade. Pretty soon, we were cycling alongside a free-flowing river on one side and expansive cliff faces on the other.

At the 25km mark, we came upon a lovely stop called Café De La Gare/Espresso Sports, half restaurant, half bike shop. We sipped on ice-cold lemonades and scarfed down our croque monsieurs before popping in next door. Along with a large fleet of bike rentals, Espresso Sports had everything you might need for your ride as well as some P'tit Train branded jerseys and merch.

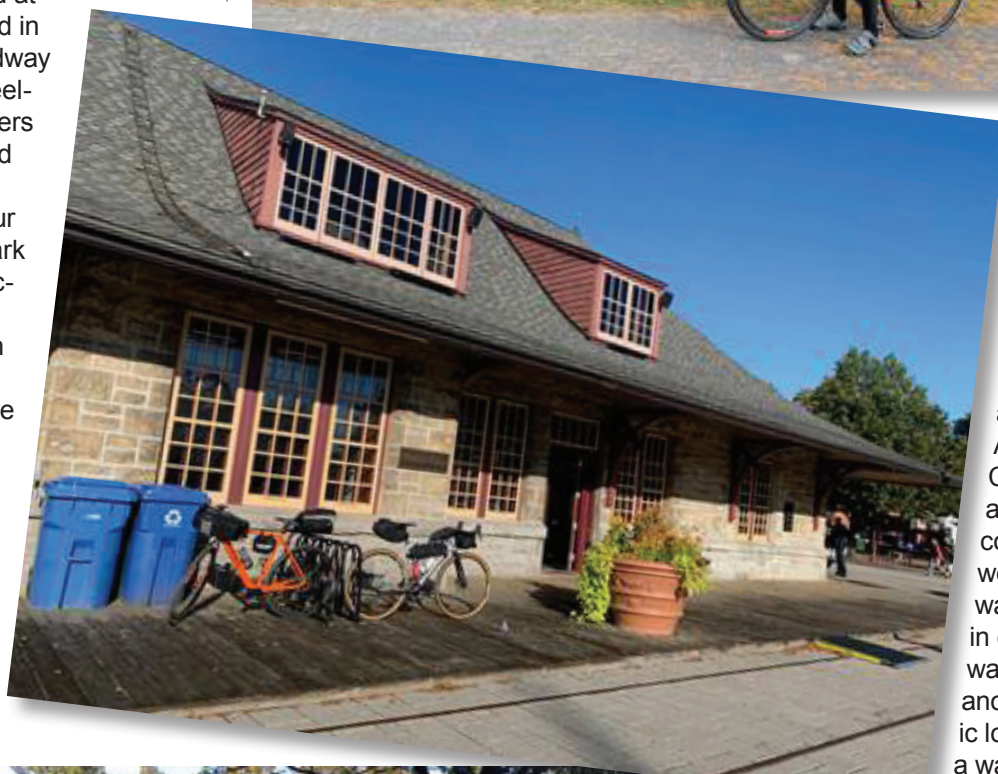
rant in the centre ville. Apart from the area just around the route's starting point, Saint Jerome isn't much to write home about. We stayed at the Comfort Inn Suites, one of just a handful of decent hotels in the area.

We started our next day bright and early with croissants, brioches, and espressos from a delicious bakery just around the corner from our start point. Place De La Gare is the train station in the center of town where the route begins, and we were thrilled when we arrived to see that it was bustling with cyclists. For our first day, we decided to bike 46km/29miles and chose the quaint village of Val David as our

Once we arrived in Val David, we found our bed and breakfast just adjacent to the path. As it turns out, we were incredibly lucky in picking Les Passionnes (www.passionnes.ca). Not only were the rooms tastefully decorated and comfortable, but the restaurant was exceptional. We got to pick from a three or five-course meal that included items like pan seared scallops, marinated duck breast, and salmon tartare, all made in the open kitchen and topped off with a beautiful bottle of red. After a dessert of tarte du pomme, we rolled ourselves back into our room and slept soundly under our plush, goose-down comforter.



We woke up the next morning to the sound of pouring rain. Not exactly what you want to hear while you strap up your bags to your bikes. The silver lining was the breakfast of champions that our chef prepared for us, but we couldn't help but notice that he served them with a sympathetic smile. "It is supposed to rain all day," he said as he placed our plates down in front of us. And rain all day it did. Our next stop was La Conception, 56km/36miles away, and we biked as fast as we could to get there. About halfway through the ride, the winds started to pick up and at one point, we stopped in a tunnel under a roadway just to shake some feeling back into our fingers and toes. We whizzed by the wine bar that we had flagged on our route at the 70km mark without giving it a second glance. We also zoomed right through the village of Tremblant, knowing that we would be backtracking through there the next day. Even in the downpour it was clear that the area was beautiful, and we were anxious to see it in the sunlight on our way back.



After what seemed like years, but was really only two and a half hours, we turned into our next bed and breakfast, Auberge Le Cosy (www.aubergelecosy.com). Sopping wet, I squished my way to the check-in counter and was greeted with another sympathetic look. "We have a washer and dryer in the lobby if you wish to use it," the receptionist said. I assured her that we would.



After our showers and a short rest, we called a cab service to take us into Tremblant to grab some food. Unfortunately, in our haste for nutrition, we picked the place that promised the quickest service which is never really a great reason to choose a restaurant. We shared an appetizer of poutine that was decent enough, but our pizza was very lackluster. The good thing about starving after a long ride, though, is that it doesn't really matter what the food tastes like. We noted

upon leaving the restaurant all of the charming places around the village that probably would have been a better choice. Good to know for the next time around!

Our room was really more of a cottage and came with the added surprise of a hot

tub! Once we got back, we lowered ourselves into the warm water and allowed our muscles to relax. The grounds at the Auberge were absolutely gorgeous and by then the rain had passed giving way to a clear sky full of stars. It was a great way to end a day that hadn't gone exactly to plan!

Due to our washout the previous day, we decided to bike back down the way we came in order to see some of the gorgeous landscapes we had missed in our rush. One of the nicest features of this route is the fact that there is a shuttle that will pick you and your bike up at any point along the way and take you to either end of the route. We originally planned to bike up the path another 35km/21miles and have the shuttle pick

us up there to take us back to our car, but a quick call to their office and they happily changed the pick-up point.

Tremblant was stunning. The lakes and rivers set against the backdrop of the Laurentide Mountains were a sight to behold. It was a cold day but there wasn't a cloud in the sky and the fall colors seemed to be at their peak. We eventually came to a final stop at the wine bar we had flagged for the previous day and had lunch while we waited for our shuttle. Since we were on the route at the very end of peak season, we were the only people getting picked up which meant a quick, hour-long drive back to our car.

Without a doubt we will be back to finish what we started. It is worth noting that Le P'tit Train Du Nord is part of La Route Verte, a trail spanning the whole province of Quebec, and the even larger Great Trail of Canada, the longest recreational trail in the world. You can read more about them here: www.routeverte.com and www.thegreattrail.ca. 🚲



News from the Richard Tom Foundation

by JOHN WILLIAMS

Greetings from the Era of Covid! Like most, if not all, outdoor cycling and sport events in the USA, the Richard Tom Foundation (RTF) Richard's Ride 2020 has been postponed. We moved the event date from Saturday, May 16, 2020 to Saturday, October 17, 2020. We truly hope we can stage the event at that time from Cochran's Base Lodge, however we will need to watch how the State and CDC Guidelines play out over the next few months. Assuming our event is a "Go" we will offer our traditional selection of rides and routes with the addition of a scenic and challenging gravel ride of 40 or more miles. We are hoping we don't need to go virtual, but that might become an option. So please save the date and stand by for updates!




**Richard Tom
FOUNDATION**

As of now, the Green Mountain Stage Race (GMSR) has not yet been cancelled. The Richard Tom Foundation Kids' Crit is an integral part, and demonstrably one of the most exciting aspects of the Burlington Criterium on Labor Day! Last year we cancelled the Kids' Crit due to unsafe conditions delivered in the form of pouring rain. This year, we will follow the lead of the GMSR Race Director in deciding whether Covid-19 restrictions will result in cancelling of the GMSR and with it the Kids' Crit. A decision is expected by late July/early August. Stay tuned for more information to be passed along through the GMBC listserve. If cancelled, we will surely miss seeing all kids race around the block, but perhaps we can come up with a different idea!? And we are already looking forward to Kids' Crit 2021! The Richard Tom Foundation will continue as Title Sponsor for the Criterium. These are challenging times in many ways! In the meantime, kids – keep riding and stay in shape! Ride with your parents and friends! Wear a helmet, stay safe!

In the interim, the Board of Directors of RTF initiated an exciting new program purchasing new or reconditioned bicycles to provide, free of charge, to children. This year we provided bicycles to three boys, ages 7-13, who did not previously own bicycles. Children were identified by grade-school teachers on the RTF Board, in coordination with the parents of the children. Many thanks to Board Members Aimee Motta, Michelle Cournoyer, and Karen

P. Ward for helping to identify the children who received bikes. Miles of smiles! Special thanks to RTF Board Member Chris Morrissey (aka "CMO"). Chris acquired and customized the bikes for each child through his business "Cool Motion Outdoor Sport." Not only did we provide bikes to each child, but also a brand-new helmet, water bottle and RTF stickers! If anyone has quality bikes that could benefit a child, please let me know at jbikenski@gmail.com. Chris has the expertise to make bikes "like new". We hope to expand on this program in the future and perhaps even offer free bikes to parents so they can have cycling adventures with their child!

We continue to support young girls through our annual support of Little Bellas where athletic skills, confidence, camaraderie, and healthy lifestyles become the norm. In this time of Covid, planning for camps for girls has been more of a struggle. This program was especially important to Richard Tom. Our support will help them conduct their events in a safe and socially responsible manner throughout the summer of 2020.

We also provide support to Local Motion which remains at the forefront in Vermont for ideas, innovations, and advocacy that result in safer streets for cyclists, runners, and walkers. 



First VP Ride in the Era of Covid

by JOHN WILLIAMS

All went well for our first Saturday VP Ride, starting from the Enosburg High School parking lot. Nine riders signed up in advance and completed the wellness check list. All nine appeared at the parking lot on a day with bright sun and few clouds for a 9:15 start. We headed north on Water Tower Road to ride the route, in a clockwise direction, up over North Jay (Rt. 105) with a smooth and thrilling descent into Jay and a stop at the Jay Country Store for fluid refills. Then it was up and over Jay/Route 242 – with its challenging 13+ percent grade to the top. The descent on Rt. 242 to Montgomery Center is a little bumpy. I think the frost heaves from winter have not completely resorbed.

Jim Paige rode to the route start from home and logged 100 miles to do so. We quickly separated into a couple of groups with the front group up the road somewhere. I never saw them again. I hung out with Susan Kelley



and Tom Broido for much of the ride. Kevin Bessett pulled the three of us all the way from Montgomery Center back to Enosburg. Thank you Kevin!

We celebrated the ride and the 4th with a brew (thanks Tom!) back at the parking lot. Let's hope that Covid-19 remains at a low level in Vermont so that we can continue our weekly Saturday VP Rides! 🚲



Socially Connecting

Continued from page 3

them to join us on the club ride. The ride leader for our group was John. In subsequent weeks John and I found ourselves often doing the same rides. I got to know John a little more through on-the-road conversations. One day I was bemoaning the lack of anyone to go mountain biking with. I had found a place that had trails, but I don't usually mountain bike alone. To my surprise, he said he had a group of guys that went out on Wednesdays and Fridays and invited me to join them. So, join them I did!

One thing I quickly learned is that it isn't called mountain biking down there, for obvious reasons. They call it "off roading" or "trail riding." I call it fast and flat. They knew of several public trail networks. One is actually is very thickly forested area just 10 miles in from the coast. Many of the trails were in thickly wooded areas where it was

barely wide enough to get the handlebars through on the single track. Among the hazards were wild pigs, gators, and possibly some snakes. The rule down there is if you go down in the dirt, don't stay there long. The wild pigs have this thing where they dig for food on the sides of the single track where it's soft. This leaves wheel sized divots all along the side of the single track for extra challenge. This group of guys became fast friends. We'd ride for three or four hours. We stopped often, which gave us time to socialize, joke and exaggerate.

By mid-March, the club activities were peaking. Many snow birds head back home by the end of April. There were many special rides planned, social activities, bike swaps and all the things that make a club vibrant. Then COVID-19 hit! I applaud the leadership of the club for taking tough and decisive action to shut down activities in mid-March right

at the peak of our season. Most in the club would fall into an "at risk" category, just for our age alone.

So, it was with a heavy heart that the cycling season ended so abruptly, just as I was starting to make some new friends. To help with next year, I actually created a notepad on my phone with names, identifying things about the person, and how I knew them. Some had nicknames or unforgettable things about them: Pivot Paul who is nicknamed for the bike he rides, Gordie who at 78 years old is one of the fastest mountain bikers I know, Rick, who just started mountain biking a year ago and is a very strong road rider - a combo that often leads to crashes, Christian with his TDF stories and Gary with so many epic road rides to his credit. The GMBC is lucky to have its own unique cast of characters, and I am eager to see you all again soon when riding can start again. 🚲

From the Desk of the VP: John Williams

On Riding During the Era of Covid

As winter tapers into spring

We begin to think of the joys that cycling will soon bring.

But with Winter 2020 brought to a screeching halt

Ski areas closed by Covid-19, it seemed all was for naught.

Our plans for starting group rides abruptly fizzled

When Covid-19 left us wondering, worried, and puzzled.

Re-uniting with our GMBC Friends became untenable,

As we were told by authorities to remain unsociable.

Being dedicated to our sport and the philosophy of YOLO,

We continued to ride, although mostly solo.

We even found some positive aspects to this lock down

When we discovered no traffic along roads and around town.

With work schedules modified or even working from home,

We found ways to satisfy our constant yearning to roam.

Each day we checked Strava to peek at our ride buddies,

How many miles, feet climbed, did they earn any trophies?

We posted our own rides on Strava each day,

Then checked for kudos, got twenty, hooray!

I have on my Garmin a "virtual rider"

With equal ability to climb or descend, no changes in speed, no bother.

Virtual "she" leaves me peeved when I'm caught on climbs,

While, with joy, I zoom ahead on the negative inclines!

I found myself talking to this virtual "she"

When, on climbs, she passed me by with imagined glee.

There were no worries of being dropped off the back,

Or of seeing riders disappear in the distance with no slack.

While overall, the Era of Covid has been far from sublime,

Here in Vermont, we are encouraged to see a decline.

Many have gathered to ride in small groups,

Taking care to avoid sneezing or clearing clogged snouts.

So I believe we cyclists discovered positive attributes,

Even in this time when Covid interrupted GMBC riding groups.

Let's hope that we can soon resume

*Riding with our GMBC buddies somewhere other than
around the Zwift room!*

Credit: Editorial assistance by Ellie Bouffard.

Re-connect with the World in 2021 with Vermont Bicycle Tours



Explore 2021 travel dates on vbt.com— including nine new trips!

Guided Biking

- Greece: Sparta, Monemvasia & the Peloponnesian Peninsula
- Spain & Portugal: Coastal Camino de Santiago
- Switzerland & France: Lake Geneva, Annecy & Valleys of the Alps

Self-Guided Biking

- Croatia: Dalmatian Coast, Split to Dubrovnik
- France: Vineyards of Beaujolais
- Ireland: Connemara & the Wild Atlantic Way
- Italy: Tuscany, Lucca to Siena
- The Netherlands: Holland's Golden Age Towns & the North Sea

Bike & Boat

- France Bike & River Cruise: Lyon to Nice

Plus 7 More Tours in the Making

We are developing a collection of 2021 tours that feature some of our favorite places to bike in the U.S.—tours that you can drive to in wide-open areas like national parks and rolling rural country sides. These tours are not yet on our website or open for reservation but will be soon!

Guided Biking

- Bryce and Zion National Parks
- Colorado
- Maryland's Eastern Shore
- Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks

Self-Guided Biking

- Acadia National Park
- California Wine Country
- Vermont



#Antiracismride

BY JARED KATZ

My childhood home lies some 260 miles south down Routes 22A and 22 to Brewster then up Route 6 to Old Ridgebury Road. For many years I thought it would be “fun,” interesting, at least, to ride that route from my home in Richmond in one day on the summer Solstice. Two hundred and sixty miles, 7,200 feet of climbing, and a 17mph average meant I could leave at the first light of dawn and arrive before full darkness set in.

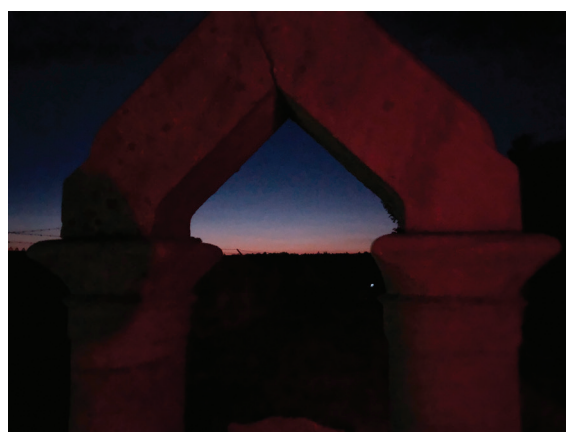
I thought this would be the year to give the route a try. Covid said no. I laid out an equivalent distance in Vermont on *Ride with GPS* and it seemed doable.

I started doing more long rides - 50's 60's, 80's, centuries... The nation caught on fire. The world turned its eyes to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery. Protests turned to riots. I began to listen differently. Trevor Noah explained it from his perspective. My internal experience of riots changed. I don't condone the destruction, the loss, or the violence, but I think I understand it and I can forgive it.

The ride that developed into my #antiracismride was socially motivated. I wanted to raise my voice and encourage others to think, reflect, consider, become angry with me, confront me, talk to me, ask me questions, while I was doing all of that to myself. I considered the term, “white privilege,” and thought of the dirt-poor whites I have come to know through my work as a cop and as a therapist. They would not think of themselves as “privileged.” My wife and I agreed on “advantaged,” as carrying the essence of the meaning.

I rode out of Richmond at 2200 on Juneteenth. It was dark. Bluetooth

in, Bob Marley filled my right ear, “Let's get together, and feel alright.” I thought about the conversation I'd had with Ian about Juneteenth and reflected that, had we had the conversation five years earlier, I would not have known what Juneteenth celebrated. I was born in 1966. I grew up in the wake of Martin Luther King Jr.'s murder. I went to alternative and private schools that prided themselves in teaching about “race,” “class,” and “culture”. At racing age 54, I am five years into knowing what Juneteenth is. I hit Main Street in Waterbury just after they'd watered it. I was buried in mud. Puns.



In Montpelier, I rode State Street to see the Black Lives Matter mural painted in front of the State House. Its recent desecration remedied; the letters bold and bright yellow on the black macadam. I felt hope at the Governor's response. We can do this, I thought. “...We forward in this generation, triumphantly.” The BLM signs faded as I rode east, and then disappeared. Maybe I missed them in the darkness, but my lights are good and strong. I didn't see another BLM sign from



Marshfield to St Albans - 150 miles further on.

An unbelievable display of fireflies greeted my climb past the road to Cabot. I turned my gaze skyward and the fireflies merged with countless stars. No light pollution here after midnight with a nearly New Moon. Campers talking around campfires, their voices carried on the light south wind off my right shoulder. "Alone" only goes so far. I love the night. What an advantage to thrive on solitude and darkness, and not fear it or what might lie just out of sight. An enormous raccoon lumbered across the road in front of me caring nothing about my ride.

Out past Peacham and on to West Danville and Joe's Pond. The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail to St J is amazing at night. Not a place for those afraid of werewolves. The trail goes through some magical cuts in the bedrock, and some fabulous tunnels. I lost count of the Luna moths that dodged in and out of my lights.

By 0200, I hit St J with a full bottle left. I chugged it. At the Maplefields, there was an on-duty and an off-duty cop in their respective trucks in the lot. Two semis idled as their drivers presumably rested. The cops moved on. Leaving the store I wondered: Would the 18 year old behind the counter have treated me differently if I were Black? He'd been so willing and accommodating of my request to wash my "Waterbury pave" from my face and bottles in the clearly marked "employees only" sink.

I opened *How to be an Antiracist*, by Ibram X. Kendi on my iPhone. So much to think about. The depth of racism's reach astounds me. Racism within cultures; racism across cultures. Centuries of indoctrination within and across cultures to maintain racist thinking and racist structures. Kendi rejects the term "micro aggression." He prefers "abuse."

In what ways have I acted abusively or with micro-aggression towards non-white people in my life? Will I seek out long lost friends from my youth to ask

them how I behaved in racist ways towards them or in their presence? Kevin, Sharon, Stan, Donna, Wilbur, Cheryl, Caroline, Vince and Rufus, Tracy, Mike, Michael, Tony, Carl, Tony, Donna L... the list of friends I may have "abused" by my actions, or inactions goes on. I had relatives with an apartment I could stay in in Stuyvesant Town, NYC. Advantage. A friend and I arrived at Grand Central and were making our way towards the main hall of the concourse when an enormous, dark-skinned hand grabbed my shoulder from behind. Rufus. I don't remember where he was coming from or going to, but he recognized us and, clearly, decided to have some fun. Brad and I were freshmen and he was either a senior or had graduated the prior year. He scared the breath out of me before I turned and saw his warm smile. Had that hand been white, would I have reacted the same way? Maybe.

I rode on through the night arriving at the crest of a hill in Barton just as the light was starting to glow in the east. A cemetery on my right caught my eye. This headstone caught the light from my tail light just as I clicked the photo. How many people have been denied access to a "final resting place" of their choice due to the color of their skin? How many ways have Blacks been marginalized, rejected, abused? I recalled something a client recently said about his pride in Vermont being the first state to abolish slavery. It wasn't as simple as that. 1777 marked Vermont's constitutional end to adult slavery. It wasn't until 2019 that a bill was introduced to amend the constitution to abolish all slavery in Vermont and that will only take effect in 2022 after a state-wide vote.

By the time I hit Troy, the sun was up. Nearly 120 miles into the day and the temperatures were just beginning to rise. As I predicted, those early season miles and the more recent centuries made this first part feel pretty easy. My pacing was good and I was holding about a 17.4 mph average. Then I came to Richford Col: a climb that hooks up and around to West Jay and affords what seems like a near

eye-level view of Jay Peak's peak.

The climb also afforded ample time for reflection. My average speed dropped below 16 mph for the first time since Duxbury. Privilege. Advantage. Breathe. I can't breathe. My head starts swimming at the thought of George Floyd, made larger than life on the cover of New Yorker magazine and rendered dead by a cop, for what? For maybe passing a counterfeited bill? I could have done that and been given the opportunity to make it right. I could have explained myself and I'd be alive.

I was a cop. I arrested people who were white, Black, Latino, male, female, straight, gay... Some cops would say, "I'm not racist. I hate everyone equally." I laughed. Very funny. Us versus them. We are the protectors. They are the violators. They break the laws we are charged with enforcing. I used to say that one of the reasons I liked policing was that everything was so clear cut: We had a rule book to follow. We also were told to exercise discretion. There were professional courtesies afforded to others with a badge. Discretion. Corruption.

I was called to a one-car accident around 0730 one morning. A car was down a slight bank off Malletts Bay Avenue. There was a very strong odor of intoxicants coming from the operator. He'd stopped at the Spanked Puppy on his way home from a night shift at IBM. Dexterities failed, he blew a .2 or so on the Alco-Sensor. According to him, the reason I arrested him on suspicion of DUI was that he was Black. Man, I thought, you have no idea. You got arrested by the most liberal "non-racist" cop in Vermont. I released him with a citation and a cab ride home and he apologized. I'd treated him as well as I treated everyone who didn't try to assault me: with dignity, respect, courtesy, calm, and understanding. I considered myself thoroughly "non-racist." I am realizing, now, that being non-racist was never enough.

Policing changed. Police departments in Chittenden County started to take



officer conduct more seriously. The men and women in blue are sworn to protect and to serve. PROTECT AND SERVE. Freddie Gray, Atatiana Jefferson, Stephon Clark, Botham Jean, Philando Castille, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Ahmaud Arbery...

This climb is like the Santa Monica Mountains. Ibram X. Kendi tells me about his experience at the Not Guilty finding in the OJ Simpson murder trial. For once, he tells me, white people might understand the hopelessness and helplessness that Black people have felt for generations. Of course OJ was guilty. But it was never “of course” he would get off scot free, while it may seem that nearly every white murder of a Black person has been without justice.

At the Jolley in Richford there is a sign on the bathroom indicating it’s closed due to Covid. I need to clean up badly. My chamois is soaked and the drop bag I collected has everything I need

to get clean, but I want some measure of privacy to do it. I wander around the store with a chocolate milk in my hand and talk to the woman who seems to be in charge. She offers to let me use the bathroom. I offer to put the unopened chocolate milk back in the cooler. She says it’s fine just to leave it on the counter and get it when I’m done. I put it in the cooler anyway. Cleaned up I get my chocolate milk and a ham sandwich along with a gallon of water. I explain my ride to the woman while she rings me up. “Huh,” she says and I’m not sure if she doesn’t know what the NAACP is, what Black Lives Matter is, doesn’t care, or doesn’t abide my journey.

I’ve ridden 140 miles and my bike is running perfectly: a Niner RLT RDO Carbon gravel bike loaded with excellent food. I haven’t seen a person of color since I left Montpelier. In a store in one of the more conservative parts of Vermont I got to use a closed bathroom and had the option of what to do

with my not yet purchased chocolate milk. Privilege. Advantage.

I meet Rob and Craig. The companionship is nice. I probably talked their ears off. I avoid their drafts - it’s a solo effort. Along the way we stop once more and the store clerk gives a somewhat more encouraging, “Wow,” at the description of the ride. Maybe that’s something.

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail isn’t as smooth as the LVRT but it’s flat, has a little shade, and has company. Despite cruising along about 18 mph my average speed has been 16.5 since the bottom of the Col. Finally, as we cruise toward St. A, it rises to 16.6. I’m ecstatic. Simple pleasures after 180 miles.

In St Albans Bay, I fill a stocking leg with ice and stuff it down the back of my jersey – a trick Bobby Bailey taught me at a hot race in Mass. I part ways with Rob and Craig with 86 miles to go. It’s not until I stop in Essex



Junction that white is no longer the only skin color around. I remember being in Kenya in 1984 and feeling so identifiable and singularly different for the first time. I grew up in an anti-Semitic and racist town in southwestern Connecticut and felt some difference then, but it was minuscule. A white Jew among whites of all stripes.

I'm exhausted. The heat is really starting to get to me. It would be so easy to head east from here and be home in 50 minutes, tops. I no longer have Ibram X. Kendi in my ear, but I have memories of every bit of racism I encountered and every instance in which I did nothing. I also remember the few times I stood up to say "It's not cool to say that," or, "It's not OK to use that language around me." "Around me." From this distance that sounds exactly like it is: shallow, inadequate, avoidant, tentative, pusillanimous.

Onward and southwestward I go, cursing Ride with GPS for the stupidity of the algorithm that allows it to put ridiculous diversions along a route. Take a right on some dead-end track and make a U-turn so you can get back on route only to be diverted again. Tilley Drive? Really? I know I'm supposed to go down 116 to Cheese Factory Road, but I also know I'm not really thinking clearly right now. Could RWGPS be right? I stop and pull out my glasses while cursing the developers for making the font too small and creating the enlarged image in a way that buries the road names beneath the route to make them illegible. Bastards! I want to scream. Jess Cover had asked me if I had considered that I might lose my mind at some point. I think my brain is melting.



I've never ridden more than 130 miles in a day, if that. I reminded myself of the texts I'd gotten along the way

during the ride so far, offering encouragement, confidence... "You got this!" They said. OK. I got this.

Steve texted me. Stop at his Paradise Farm for a cold brew? Yes! Set a course for Lake Road and engage the turbo-thrusters! At least set the course and keep turning the pedals into the now west-southwest headwind. Steve and Dovie offered me a hose, iced coffee, ice for the now empty ice stocking, and a PB & honey. I didn't mention that I felt nauseous and had stopped sweating. It was weird because my kidneys still seemed to be working and my bladder worked. The nausea abated about the time I posted a video of my current condition - cooked. I needed a creemee.

The line at Cookie Love was too long. It's so HOT. I settled for a bottle of cold water from Jolley; poured it over my head and continued towards Huntington. No ice at Beau-dry's. Damn! A gallon of cold water on my head and in my bottles jump started my sweating. Omitting the stupid RWGPS detours meant I was going to come up short on miles. I added to the course. Add Huntington Road, Cemetery Road, down Kenyon to Route 2 and a stop at Hatchet for a maple creemee at last (!!!!) and then Cochran Road to home.

Fait accompli. 266 miles in 20 hours from 2200 Friday to 1800 Saturday with (somehow) four hours of down time. Sixteen hours. 960 minutes. At an average cadence of 89 that's 85,440 turns of the cranks. My knees hurt. They feel worn. I suppose they are.

I finished *How to be an Antiracist*. There is a lot for me to think about

and I'm trying hard not to infer that everyone else should follow my introspective journey. I hope everyone will, though, because I think that the only way our species can move forward is to rethink the way we've lived our socio-political-economic lives and commit to living them differently. Everyone who followed their European forebears and has benefitted from their systems has perpetuated, tacitly, the racist ideology and functionality of society. The "everyone" are predominantly white.


The words we choose to describe the beliefs we have and the way we view the world have significant impact on the ones who hear those words.

Terms like *person of color, micro-aggression, privilege, conservative, liberal, capitalist, racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic*, and others create a story for the listener that might inhibit their ability to hear. I want to do better, more, and be part of positive change. I



want to keep learning. White supremacists co-opted the gesture meaning "everything is OK." That gesture, right index finger to thumb with the other three fingers raised, represents W P, "White Power," and the racist belief system they promulgate to the racist thugs who co-opted it. Screw that and them. It means everything is OK. This is a deep and long engagement in the journey to change.

We got this.

The unabridged version of this story can be found at:
<http://bikelifevt.blogspot.com/2020/06/antiracismride.html> 

L'Etape et Moi

BY SPENCER KNAPP

PART ONE OF A THREE-PART SERIES

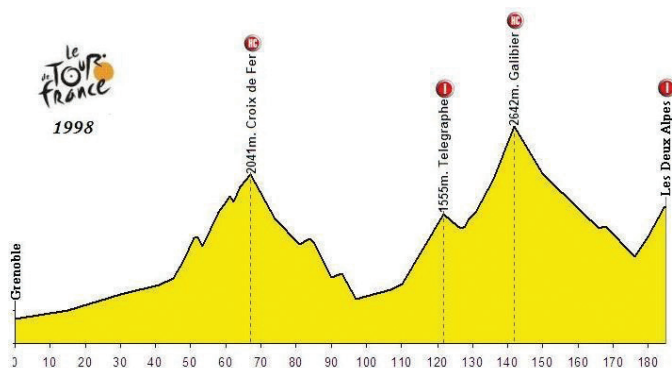
I had the good fortune to do six L'Etapes du Tour over a decade or so but finished just four. Idiotic mishaps spoiled the other two and almost a few more. More about that in a minute.

Each L'Etape was a standout lifetime adventure, despite my screw-ups. My last one in 2009 sent me to a French hospital for a week, had me recuperating in Lyon with a collapsed lung for weeks after that, and then, under strict orders from my wife (and physician) on returning home I was ordered to do no more etapes. This was sensible advice, given my dubious track record. I've followed it steadfastly.

For those who don't know, L'Etape du Tour is a French cyclosporitif presented by the Tour de France organization every year since 1993. Each L'Etape simulates a mountain stage of that year's Tour with up to 10,000 riders ranging from old guys like me to out-of-contract young pros looking to be noticed. With masses of revved-up cyclists packed on narrow French roads with dreams of glory and questionable bike-handling skills, the hazards of L'Etape are substantial. I encountered more than my share. But the thrill of riding the same course as the pros is seductive.

Now, you can read no further if you get bored from other rider's bike blab. I'll understand. But if you'd enjoy a first-hand account of an epic event on classic French mountain roads filled with colossal foolishness, here goes.

Round 1: 1998 Grenoble-Les Deux Alpes



Entry in my first L'Etape in 1998 was utterly haphazard. I'd organized a trip with nine bike buddies to Bourg d'Oisans, a well-known cycling center in a charming village at the base of Alpe d'Huez. This was our first trip together, and we had grand plans to ride the big cols and catch a view of the Tour as it passed nearby. Organizing the trip pre-internet from books and travel guides was entirely seat-of-the-pants. We were clueless. But somehow, we found an inexpensive cycling-friendly hotel on a quiet street in

Bourg and pulled together other travel logistics.

That winter, while browsing a French cycling magazine in a New York City bike shop (a rare find in those days), I noticed an article on what was then to be the fifth annual L'Etape. It looked like an event from my dreams: 195 kilometers over two iconic cols – the Croix de Fer and Galibier – replicating the 15th stage of that year's Tour. The fantasy ride of a lifetime, I thought. The route started not far from Bourg in Grenoble and ended nearby in Les Deux Alpes. Perfect.

French riders had to qualify by meeting cut-off times in another cyclosporitif somewhere in France but foreigners like us were given byes. All ten of us signed up swiftly, envisioning a relaxed but epic ride. We had no idea.



Gorges de la Borne, near Villars-de-Ians, France, July 26, 1998. L to R, James Rosen, Crocker Bennett, Bob McKearin, Doug Gentile, Spencer Knapp, Steve Maley, Jack Bergeron, Tom Moody, Sam Hoar.

On arrival, we did some great exploratory rides on the small roads around Bourg d'Oisans for a few days, and the night before L'Etape, we registered with 4,500 others at a conference center in downtown Grenoble. That gave us our first sense of the event's magnitude. The next day, two of our group played by the rules, got up in the middle of the night, and drove to Grenoble well ahead of the 7 a.m. start time. The rest of us slept later and rode from our hotel to a nearby intersection in Allemont, where we planned to slip into the pack as it came by about 40k from the start. We predicted the first riders would arrive later than 8 a.m., after riding gradually uphill most of the way. When a pack of 200 sped by us just before 8 a.m., averaging 40kph+ from the start, we realized instantly that this would be no relaxed ride.

We allowed thousands to pass us and slipped into a group with numbers like ours in the 2000's to start what would be a nearly 50k climb from Allemont to the Col de Croix de Fer. It was hot and heading rapidly to the high-90s. We were 160k from the finish with 5000m+ of climbing ahead of us.

The climb of the Croix de Fer was packed shoulder-to-shoulder in the lower sections but thinned gradually as we climbed for several hours. I stayed close to Jack and Doug, riding at a casual pace. Our legs were fresh but the ascent was endless and the heat started to take bite at the top, where a rest stop with food and drinks was overrun.

The descent of the Croix de Fer swept through panoramic alpine scenery for more than 30k, though there was little chance to take in the views with riders flying by all around at 70+kph. Near the base, there was a narrow, curved tunnel dug into the stone mountainside. The entry had a large sign screaming "Danger de Mort!" in alarming red letters. I slowed. Doug didn't, skidded in the curve and body-blocked the tunnel's stone wall. Jack and I were slightly ahead, missed his spill altogether and didn't see him again until we regrouped at the base of the descent in St. Jean de Maurienne. An ER doc in his regular life, Doug cleaned up a few bloody cuts and scrapes but was otherwise unhurt, and we pressed on.

The next 30k to the Col de Telegraphe through Saint-Michel-de-Maurienne was an inferno on shade-free, freshly asphalted roads in blistering temps. Our tires oozed in melting tar. Riders started to drop out in large numbers in the unbearable heat. In the end, less than half the starters actually finished. On the slopes of the 20k climb to the Galibier, beyond the village of Valloire, many of us dismounted to cool our feet and legs in small mountain streams by the road side – a comical sight. The final kilometers of the Col de Galibier were steep and long, like 5x App Gap on any day. After 140k and two big climbs on a brutally hot day, this last section was ridiculous. My feet were on fire from dehydration, but there was a welcome cool breeze on top. I was dizzy, donned a windbreaker and took several minutes to recover. A gendarme took my picture.



At the start of the descent of the Col de Galibier, July 23, 1998.

The 40k descent of the Galibier along endless switchbacks was a thrill, eventually crossing a dam to start the short, final climb to Les Deux Alpes. My small group of riders moved up the hill at a death-march-like pace in the heat. With 4k to go, I pulled alongside a Frenchman, the first rider I'd caught in hours. We exchanged pleasantries. He said he regularly did cyclosporifs all over France. He seemed very fit but the grey in his hair and lines on his face caused me to ask his age. "Soixante-quatorze (74)," he said with a wry smile, and then pedaled easily away from me as we neared the finish. The memory of his smile has remained with me for years – an incentive for future L'Etapes.

A few days later, I stood by the side of the road on Les Deux Alpes to watch Marco Pantani destroy the field on this same course, finishing alone and moving into the Tour lead ahead of Jan Ullrich, who collapsed on the final climb and dropped from first to third overall. The American, Bobby Julich, moved into second. I was inches from Ullrich as he came by me. His face looked just like mine a few days earlier. Wasted.

Round 2: 2002 Aime – Cluses



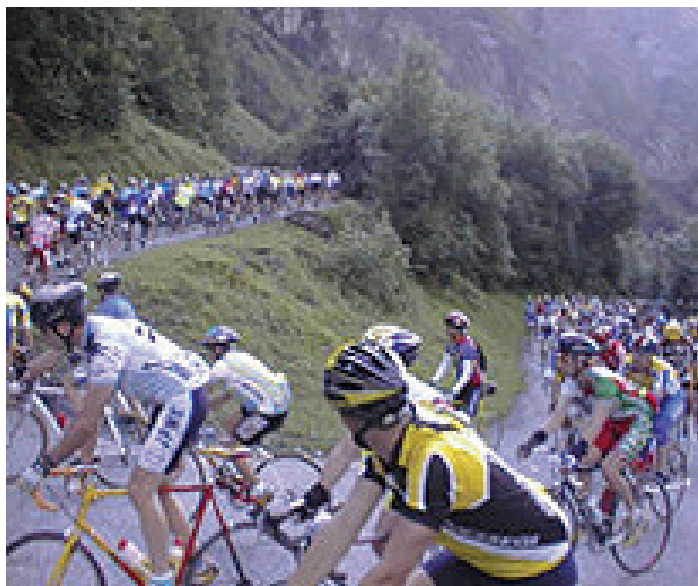
Four years later, I returned for Round 2, much better prepared with a few hold-overs from 1998 and a bunch of newcomers; a dozen or so mostly Vermonters. We knew what to expect and had trained with greater discipline. The 2002 course was at least as challenging as 1998; a little shorter at 142k but with four major cols and 5000m of climbing, simulating Stage 17 of the Tour that year. My over-ambitious goal was a top-50 finish in the 50+ age group, which would give me a front-group starting position in future L'Etapes. OK, aim high.

A few days before the event, we settled at a hotel in Bourg St. Maurice, a village in the French Savoie at the base of the Cornet de Roseland a few kilometers from Aime, the start town, a short ride from the Italian border, and at the center of numerous climbs in every direction. In the next few days, we did exploratory rides up, down and around the Cornet, registered in Aime the night before L'Etape, and went to bed early with the high anxiety that precedes any big event. I barely slept. My anxiety was widely shared.

James came to breakfast at 5 a.m., fully kitted with his bike shoes on and his helmet fully buckled. We asked if he went to bed that way.

We played things straight this time, got up before dawn for breakfast at the hotel, and rode downhill to the charming village of Aime, lining up by number with thousands of others in waves of starting gates awaiting a 7 a.m. start. The morning was gorgeous; blue and sunny, warm but not sweltering.

The start was all uphill for 31.5k to the summit of the Cormet, initially on a wider road but switching to a narrow mountain lane after Bourg and immediately congested. In the lower sections of the tiny road, riders were shoulder-to-shoulder, wheel-to-wheel, six across, frequently stopping abruptly as things jammed in the endless switchbacks. It was maddening, impossible to make a consistent pace, and even worse when an ambulance inched through the massive peloton, sirens blaring, and we all had to step aside.



Climbing the Cormet de Roseland, July 22, 2002.

But things spread out half way up the climb as the road opened to panoramic views of Mont Blanc. My confidence lifted, as I started to pass riders on the final kilometers to the col, where there was a crowded rest stop. I stopped quickly for a bottle refill and energy bars, before starting the screaming 30k descent. At speeds pushing 90kph, I kept a safe distance from others, especially on the sweeping turns. With daredevils all around, that wasn't easy.

At Beaufort, the downhill quickly turned back to uphill on the 19k Col des Saisies, and there was another aid station and bottle refill in the ski village at the top, before another 15k descent to Flumet. That's where things went sideways.

On a series of tight switchbacks near the bottom, a young French rider on my inside right lost his wheel, slid into me hard, and body-blocked me into a two-foot high stone wall marking the road's left edge and a precipitous drop-off. Hitting the wall at hub height, I catapulted into space and landed 20' below on what was miraculously a soft pine-needle forest floor. I wasn't hurt - not even scratched - and started to scramble back to my bike. The young rider looked over the wall directly above me, his hands raised sheepishly to his shoulders with the universal "Uh, sorry" gesture and asked, "Ça va?" In situations like this, what can one say but "oui," which is what I said with teeth clenched. I then spent 20 minutes climbing back up the steep precipice using tree stumps and rocks for footing. At the top, the young rider was long gone, and my bike lay against the stone wall. At a glance it appeared undamaged - another miracle? - but when I picked it up to remount, the front fork split in two. It had been severed on impact, and the front wheel was a pretzel. End of Round 2.

But not the end of a very long day. I walked downhill a kilometer or two to the village of Flumet as bikes whizzed by me. There was an aid station in the village but of course, no mechanics and no replacements for a broken fork and wheel. I watched all my buddies go by along with thousands of others. And sulked. This was the era before iPhones. I had no way to communicate and no way to hitch back to our hotel, as roads were closed. Nothing to do but wait. And sulk. Which is what I did in the village of Flumet - a charming spot - for roughly six hours until my buddies returned from the finish line after the roads opened and picked me up.

So I was batting .500 on the two L'Etapes I'd started, glad to be uninjured but otherwise miserable.

The story had a happier ending the next day when we drove to Bourg d'Oisans, where we knew of a world class bike shop from four years earlier. In an hour or so, my fork and wheel were replaced, my bike was back in action, and I did a celebratory ride up Alpe d'Huez with nearly fresh legs and over and around the Col de Sarenne -- one of the nicest rides in the Alps in my view. Thoughts turned to Round 3. 🚲

**Check out the next issue of Perspectives
for the second in a three-part series of L'Etape et Moi**



Garmin Rear Flasher with Radar Review

by KEVIN BESSETT

"A rear flasher with built-in radar. When paired with a compatible Garmin cycling computer, you will be alerted when a vehicle is approaching you."

Garmin released its first radar-equipped rear flasher about seven years ago, and I remember thinking to myself that my \$20 mirror cost a lot less than that \$200 fancy flashing radar thingy. But as a few years passed, and several people I know were harmed in crashes with cars, my interest grew. Then one day, on another pilgrimage to a local shop, I saw a fancy flashing radar thingy on display, and a friend who worked there convinced me – well, he nodded as I convinced myself – to buy one. Now having used radar for several years, I am a true believer.

A radar setup is not cheap. The device with a flasher is expensive, as stated above (nixing the flasher will knock off \$70) and it must be paired with a compatible Garmin computer or watch, or Wahoo computer. If you have neither, Garmin sells a handlebar-mounted unit dedicated to the radar for \$95.

I will state upfront that I still use a bar-end mirror. So why go with radar? Well, if you are like me and constantly checking your mirror, an audible alert saves a huge amount of eye movement and head shifting. Plus, radar give you another set of eyes, which I find incredibly useful and comforting.

How does it work? When the radar detects a vehicle, three quick beeps sound and a narrow column on the side of the computer's display appears showing real-time data on where the vehicle is in relation to you. A white dot in the column represents the vehicle, and the dot moves upwards towards a red dot at the top of the column, which is you. When the white dot is at the bottom of the column, it means the vehicle is 153 yards behind. When it's just below the red dot, the vehicle is right behind you. Side bars will also appear on the screen. On colored displays, brown bars mean the vehicle is closing in at an acceptable speed while red indicates that it's moving faster than desired. After the vehicle passes, the bars turn green and disappear after a few seconds. Another cool feature is the flasher. As the vehicle nears, the flasher becomes brighter, thus drawing more attention to it and you. And, get this, the radar can track up to eight bogies at once.

Radar has two selling points. As mentioned, the alerting sound greatly reduces the need to constantly shift your eyes and head to look at a mirror. The other benefit is that when approaching intersections or splits in the road (like going by an on-ramp to an interstate), you kind of feel like you have the upper hand knowing that four cars, for example, are behind you. This "intel" can be used to demine where to position yourself for the greatest visibility (move into the lane or keep on in the shoulder). The best feature



**The mount to the post.
(Kevin Bessett)**

of all, however, is that a quick glance at the computer will immediately reveal when the vehicle closest to you has slowed to your speed when the white dot is stationary in the column. This indicates that the driver is waiting for you to clear the area where s/he is heading. Having that detail of information is also very useful on stretches of road with oncoming traffic. When an oncoming vehicle is present and a vehicle is behind you, if the white dot is stationary or is moving more slowly towards you, you know that it is not going to try to squeeze by.

I do not find the three quick alerting beeps annoying, and alerts only occur when the radar is not currently tracking a vehicle and detects one. The quick glances at the computer to see what's going on are easy, too. You can configure some aspects of the alerting sound and display.

The model I have is the Varia RTL510. Battery life is about 15 hours on blinking mode, six hours on steady, and is charged via a micro USB port. Even when several riders are right behind me, the radar will detect vehicles, but sometimes not as quickly. Occasionally when a rider is approximately 50 yards behind me and closing, the radar will give a false-positive.

Going the radar route is pricey. Is it necessary? No. Does it provide information that you can use to help your safety? Absolutely, and it's simple to use. That said, radar is not a replacement for a mirror, nor does it negate the need for listening for traffic and looking behind you at times. 🚲



White dots on right side indicate vehicles, and move upwards to the red dot at the top, which is you. Orange bars indicate vehicles are approaching at acceptable speeds. (photo obtained on internet)

2020 Time Trial Series

By **KEVIN BESSETT**

What do I write about? Nothing is going on in the TT world right now. Hmmm.

Well, maybe people are wondering why time trials didn't start when groups of 25 were allowed to gather with physical distancing in place. That is a good question. First, I was not comfortable with that idea and felt that volunteers needed to run events would likely feel the same way, which is understandable.

The other issue that factored in, is the need for a larger footprint at the start area. If five people are waiting to start, that is 30 feet of space needed along the road and perhaps even more. It's not a great distance, but along a road with little shoulder, the larger footprint will impact traffic flow, especially when vehicles are heading in both directions. Most courses do not have a wide shoulder at the start area.

With COVID cases down, people generally feeling safer, and the fact that all but one of the courses in the schedule from late July forward has sufficient shoulder room to play with, TTs may start up, but precautions will be in place. There may be another TT added to the schedule. The GMSR not likely to happen this season, which will free up the last Thursday in August for another TT.



2020 GMBC Time Trial Schedule

NOTE: Events may start later in July—courses subject to change.

Watch the Listserv or visit www.thegmbc.com for the latest updates

NOTE: All events start at 6:30 pm on Thursdays

	Date	Course Name	Timers* / Notes
July	23	Jonesville	J Witmer
	30	Huntington	J Williams
Aug	6	Jeffersonville North	S Messier
	13	Jonesville	K Bessett
	20	Bolton Hill Climb	R Phillips
	27	TBD	?

KEY: *Timing assignments determined by rider participation last year.

Helmets required and NO RIDING 2-ABREAST at any time.

For info contact Kevin Bessett at kevinbessett@gmavt.net

• These events are
FREE and open to all •

Instructions for Timers

- When to arrive:
/2 hour before start time.
- Timing gear & instruction:
Provided by organizer.

Know the course and rules, and please:

- Enforce helmet usage and sharing the road.
- Make each rider reads the guidance prior to signing-up.
- Inform riders to be discreet if nature calls.
- Keep riders on grass-side of orange cones at start area.
- Remind riders to yell start position 10 meters before finish.

Instructions for Riders

Riding a bicycle on the road has inherent risks. All courses use open roads and you will be riding at your own risk. You must obey all traffic laws. GMBC assumes no liability.

- Use a bathroom prior to arriving – if nature calls, be discreet or be disqualified.
- Know the course, turns, intersections, and danger spots.
- A helmet is mandatory at all times -- eye protection recommended.
- **NO RIDING TWO ABREAST.**
- Always ride on the right side of the travel lane unless in areas where riding in the lane is safest (such as on fast descents).
- Look behind you before passing or turning around.
- If you are held up by traffic at the turn-around point, let timers know -- your time will be adjusted.
- Your start position is the number of minutes you start after the event starts.
- Riders start one minute apart.
- Yell your start number 10 meters before finishing.

Course Descriptions (see website for detailed information)

Bolton Hill Climb: 6.86 mi. **Parking:** At rest area on Rt. 2 in Bolton (about 2-miles east intersection of Bolton Valley Rd. on Rt. 2). **Start:** At parking area, head west on Rt. 2. Take right on to Bolton access road and finish at top. **Caution:** It's a very fast descent off the mountain with a few sharp corners. At top, keep voices down so not to bother residents!

Huntington: 12.71 mi. **Parking:** Brewster Pierce school in Huntington Ctr. **Start:** Small bridge just north of the village. Head south on Huntington Rd. to junction of Rt. 17. Turn around and head back to start area. **Caution:** Look for traffic when making U-turn.

Jeffersonville North: 16.59 mi. **Parking:** As Jeffersonville fishing access/pull-off on Rt. 108, just north of the rotary. **Start:** End of guardrail on south side of parking area. Head north on Rt. 108 for 8.3 miles. The turnaround is at the top of the second steep climb. Head back to the start area. **Caution:** Look for traffic when making U-turn.

Jonesville: 16.15 mi. **Parking:** Along Rt. 2 on east-bound lane (all wheels MUST be off the pavement so more space for passing bicycles and cars). **Start:** On Rt. 2 (1/5 mile west of Golf Course Road), head east for 8 mi. to the entrance to the entrance to Sun Common building. Turn and head back to the start area. **Caution:** Look for traffic when making U-turn.



GMBC Sponsors & Friends



**Thanks for
your support!**

GMBC Club Membership

A single adult membership is \$25 and a family membership is \$30.
Cyclists who are age 17 and under can join for just \$10.

The membership year runs from January 1st to December 31st,
with lots of great benefits.

Members, encourage your friends to join!
For more information and the membership form visit
<https://thegmbc.com/membership/>

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For information on GMBC clothing, visit
<https://thegmbc.com/club-clothing/>



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